Marcomm Writing Guidelines

Before you start writing always do research first. Check the company’s values, mission statement, and culture. Next, develop two personas: one for the consumers and one for the company. Now you can start writing and you will rock!

NEWSLETTERS

Length: 2-20 pages

Newsletter types:
1. Employee newsletters, Member newsletters, Community newsletters, Special-interest newsletters
2. E-newsletters and hard copies

Purpose: to build relationships and/or report on news

Contents:
1. Recurrent articles about a certain topic (themes) and one-time items (news)
2. News briefs and feature articles

Writing style for news briefs:
1. Usually just one paragraph
2. Inverted pyramid (the most important information comes first)
4. Avoid the use of I and YOU
5. Each sentence should contain NO more than 35 words
6. In case you have more than one paragraph, each paragraph should contain NO more than 2-3 sentences
7. No slant

Writing style for feature articles:
1. Put a human face to the news story (Q&A, a behind-the-scenes look at the organization, testimony, how-to, etc.)
2. Can have a slant/angle
3. Lighter and brighter in tone
4. 1\textsuperscript{st} paragraph is a delayed lead (starts with what raises curiosity such as a description, an anecdote, etc.)
5. 2\textsuperscript{nd} paragraph contains the article’s main point (Use the most important information after the delayed lead, otherwise you’ll lose your reader!)
6. End with a formal conclusion (It needs to be in line with the delayed lead to complete the “cycle”)

PRESS RELEASES

Length:
1. Hard copy press release (no more than 2 pages or 300 words)
2. Email press release (shorter, but the same writing style)

Purpose: to convey a message to the audiences without paying for advertising
**Type of press releases:**
1. Publicity release
2. Product release
3. Bad news release
4. Financial release
5. Feature release (soft news)

**Writing style:**
1. NO advertising tone
2. Objective and NOT persuasive (Neutral tone)
3. AP Style (use the AP book)

**Hard news release writing style:**
1. **Headline** (“sales pitch”- use present tense, avoid the articles a/an, the; clear and concise; use key words that you repeat in the body of the news release (SEO))
2. **Secondary head** (a complete sentence with a full verb, add to the information in the headline)
3. **Lead** (1st paragraph; include the answers to the journalism questions; 30-35 words)
4. **Body** (inverted pyramid style): 1-2 pages; short paragraphs
5. 1st paragraph: the most important information ➔ then have a transition to the 2nd paragraph through a sentence that contains a summary of the 1st paragraph
6. 3rd and/or 4th paragraph should contain a few citations
7. **Boilerplate** (the last paragraph): a short summary that also includes some information about the company’s mission 50-100 words

**Feature press release:**
1. **Headline and subhead** (catchy and cute)
2. **Delayed lead** (do NOT summarize the answers to the journalism questions but write something captivating 1-2 sentences. End the delayed lead with a sentence that clarifies the goal of the press release)
3. **Body**: NO inverted pyramid (describe how the event unfolded over a period of time)
4. **Ending** (return to the catchy beginning to create a “cycle”)

**PITCHLETTERS**

**Purpose:** send/email a letter to the editor/producer asking them to interview you or somebody else for their show/news article

**Writing style:**
1. Invite the editor to take advantage of an opportunity instead of writing them they “must interview you”
2. Use the company’s letterhead
3. **Inverted pyramid: 1st paragraph**: you can either get the editor’s attention through an interesting fact or by listing your qualification (Write about what entitles you to write the pitch letter)
4. **2nd paragraph** (Answer to the journalism questions + Be persuasive: why should the editor care? Is a possible interview in line with the media outlet? (Provides quotes, examples, etc.)
5. **3rd paragraph**: a continuation of the 2nd but with a different idea
6. **4th paragraph**: restate why the editor should interview you but use different words.
7. Make sure you add all your contact information at the end
**BYLINES**

*Purpose:* to position your company as a leader on the market ➔ to draw more consumers

*Types of bylines:*
1. Problem-solution
2. Lesson learned (describe obstacles, give examples, etc.)
3. Case study (situation encountered at work, etc.)

*Writing style:*
1. Opinion-based articles
2. Attributed to an author
3. Do NOT require objectivity
4. Theoretically written by a senior executive (practically a spokesperson/ marcomm person does the work)
5. Check the newspaper that is widely read by your consumers
6. Check to see what they cover, what is hot, what is trendy
7. The editor will ask you to submit a paragraph first (a summary)
8. Avoid mentioning your company’s name throughout the byline
9. Use the inverted pyramid style (the most important information comes first)
10. Each idea in a different paragraph (4-5 paragraphs suffice)
11. Memorable ending
12. Subjective, personable, NO marketing

**OP-EDS** (“opposite the editorial page”)

*Purpose:* similar to pitchletters (to position your company as a leader on the market)

*Writing style:*
1. Tackle issues that are on the news
2. Short sentences and paragraphs
3. Relate to your readers
4. Acknowledge other points of view

**WRITING ADS**

**TV**

*Length:* a one-minute script

*Writing guidelines:*
1. Short and catchy sentences
2. Tell them what you are advertising for
3. Match your writing with the video
4. Ending: use a CALL FOR ACTION, i.e. tell them what they need to do (provide phone no., website, etc.)
5. Start with an effective attention getter!
6. Same jingle, same voice, same colors
7. Use emotion and logic

**RADIO**

*Writing guidelines:*
1. What the product stands for
2. Short and catchy sentences
3. Have an attention getter
4. Repeat the product’s/company’s name at least 3 times.
5. Make your product/company sound distinctive, even more distinctive than in a TV ad.
6. Use emotion and logic
7. End with a CALL FOR ACTION

WRITING FOR PRINT
1. **Headline**: a) short, concise sentence b) 2-3 words usually but you can have more (For e.g., For nine months, you protected him like no one else could. *Print ad for: Enfamil*)
2. **Subhead**: not necessary but, if used, adds to the headlines; must be shorter than the headline (For e.g., Now we're here to help. *Print ad for: Enfamil*)
3. **Layout**: (white space+ images); Images are not required but we should use them. (Of course, they always get more attention and are more persuasive than mere text.)
4. **Body**: conversational tone but to the point
5. **Short, problem-solving format**
6. **Call for action**
7. **Contact info**
8. Numbers 5, 6, 7 go IN THIS ORDER

BLOG POSTS

*Length: depends on the purpose and the media outlet used* (For e.g., One-two sentences on FB [fewer words on Twitter, of course] where you provide a very *brief and catchy* description of the actual post that readers can find on your official website. The FB post etc. should also include a link to your actual blog post. On your website, the length depends on your purpose.)

*Writing style for the blog post on your website*:
1. Include one regional keyword (for e.g., Boston, etc.---> increases SEO)

2. Include one interactivity feature. (for e.g., a link to another website, or a previous blog post, etc. Make sure it opens in another window: we do not want the users to go away from our website…they may not come back).

3. Write in a concise and clear way while remaining conversational and friendly.

4. Use our friend, the inverted pyramid style (The first sentence must convey the most important information.)